



COCHIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS.

(OFFICIAL REPORT).

BUDGET SESSION OF 1101.

12th of Karkadagam 1101.

Tuesday, the _____
27th of July 1926.

The Council assembled in the Town Hall, Ernakulam, at 11.30 a. m. on the 27th of July 1926 corresponding to the 12th of Karkadagam 1101, the President being in the Chair. Only Messrs. K. Krishna Menon, Poulo Mampilli and H. J. Walmesly were absent.

The discussion regarding the mode of answering questions.

Mr. N. Padmanabha Menon.—I want some information. During the last budget session and the sittings of the legislative session more than 20 questions used to be answered on each day. I believe they numbered 31 or 32. Now, we find only 20 questions answered each day. I do not know the reason why.

President.—What is the reason according to you?

Mr. N. Padmanabha Menon.—If it is due to want of time, I may state that questions were sent in as soon as the legislative session was over.

President.—The Government attempt to answer questions as early as possible, and there is no intention on the part of the Government to delay answering questions. Thus 20 questions have been arranged for each day. We want to spread the work throughout the sitting; that is our object. I suppose we have 280 questions ready. We could answer all of them in a day, if we want. That is not a proper mode of working. What is the meaning of your remark, Mr. N. Padmanabha Menon? How can we give reasons for all these things?

Mr. N. Padmanabha Menon.—I want to know how more questions could be answered during the past sessions?

President.—Answering a smaller number of questions in a day is to your advantage; because, as Dr. A. R. Menon re-

marked yesterday, if we put a great number of questions in a day, supplementary questions in respect of all the questions could not be put. From one point of view it is good.

Mr. N. Padmanabha Menon.—It must have been clear to the Government that there has been dissatisfaction as to the number of questions answered during the last session, and instead of giving more satisfaction to the House, the number of questions is becoming less and less. Not that we ask the intention of the Government, but we want the reasons for the same.

President.—There was a resolution of Mr. A. Eachara Menon to say that questions were not properly answered by the Government. I admitted that resolution, but it did not come up for discussion. Do you say that questions were not properly answered or the number is small? What are the proper grounds for the House to feel that they were not properly treated? I am not in a position to understand it.

Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar.—If I remember right, the President in a previous session said that questions regarding one and the same point would be put together.

President.—I do not deny that.

Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar.—My remarks were only in regard to one member's putting questions with many sub-divisions on one and the same subject. I did not make a statement that questions relating to one and the same subject, irrespective of the interpellators, should be picked up and answered together.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Sir, the answers given to us are not quite satisfactory. I shall give you an instance. The figures given in respect to the answer to a question were not correct. I request that satisfactory answers may be given to us in future.

President.—Mr. Padmanabha Menon, since 30 questions were answered each day in the previous session, you say that the answering of questions during this session is not satisfactory?

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—I have got facts to show that the figures given here are not correct. See Appendix 4 of last day's Questions and Answers.

President.—You may bring it out by means of a fresh question.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Only 13 questions for the budget session are seen as having been put by me. But, as a matter of fact, I had put more questions than that.

Mr. Chakko Cheruvathur.—It is seen from the answer that 4 or 5 of my questions were answered during the previous session. In fact, only one was answered.

President.—I find that, out of 620 and odd questions, 150 and odd only were left unanswered.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—That may be a printing mistake.

President.—Facts should be searched for. We cannot say that they were incorrectly printed.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—This question was put for the simple reason of our knowing what all questions were sent up this session, and what all questions are going to be answered this session. That is the only object of this question. Further, questions not answered during a particular session would lapse according to the rules.

President.—If you will just hear my suggestion, I would like to say that you would do well to send up your questions as early as possible. We have to obtain the necessary materials from the Heads of Departments. They have to be scrutinised here, and answers framed. You should understand the difficulty of the Government in answering your questions. We appreciate the efforts of Mr. Mathew who has sent up most of his questions very early, and I think most of his questions are answered. All this come to only this, that you should send up your questions early, so that the Government may have ample time to get the necessary answers in time.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—I did not send up a single question this time, because I knew that the Government had got a number of questions, and I thought of giving them time at least to answer them. Not that I had no questions to ask. I knew that they had enough work. Questions have been sent months ago. At the rate of 20 questions a day, we get only 200 questions answered during this session.

President.—How many questions do you want to be answered? I tell you that some questions were left unanswered for want of time.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—The provision is there. You can claim longer notice, say 3 months' time. The President can allow questions of shorter notice also.

President.—In the Mysore Legislative Council, a member can send up only 2 questions and one resolution for a session.

Mr. George Chakyamuri.—Now, that rule has been revised.

President.—Now, I hear that has been revised, and that any member can send up as many questions as he wishes.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—The Hon'ble Member for Vadakkan-cheri said that questions are not sent up to the Government for the purpose of testing their dexterity in answering questions.

President.—From what you say, I understand that you are throwing out a suggestion that this is a sort of cross-examination of the officials. To that I take objection. Whatever information you want, I place before you; and it is time for all these notions to be removed.

Mr. S. F. Nunez.—Permit me to make an observation on this point. The members are not to be blamed for saying that the Government are not furnishing answers to their questions in time. Now, members would not ask so many questions, if they are given the right of putting supplementary questions on all questions. In many of the Councils in India and all over the world, every member has the right of putting supplementary questions on all the questions answered by the Government.

President.—So far as Travancore is concerned, I can tell you that members have no such right.

Mr. S. F. Nunez.—In the previous session, you said you would consider the question when we requested to be allowed to put supplementary questions on all the questions. You will extend to us that right and liberty, and that would minimise the number of questions that are now being sent up to the Government. When I came to the Council Office some 2 months ago, I found 200 or 300 questions had been sent in by members. I thought the amount of work put upon the Government in answering those questions was heavy enough, and I asked my Hon'ble friend Mr. A. B. Salem not to send questions to the Government to be answered for the budget session, as they had already received a good number of questions. I would have sent questions after questions, but that would be paralysing the action of the executive machinery. All these can be minimised, if all members are allowed to ask supplementary questions on all questions. If such a ruling could be given by you, Sir, that change in the Council law would be of great help in this direction.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—May I request you to place on the table a statement of figures, after verification, of the questions and answers that had been hitherto answered?

President.—It is not possible, at any rate, not feasible; We shall now proceed with questions and answers.

Questions and Answers.

The X-ray Installation.

21. Dr. A. G. Menon.—Will the Government be pleased to state.—

(1) when the building for the X-ray installation was handed over to the Medical Department by the Public Works Department;